Old Master Paintings from the Collection of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza

The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection

The art housed in Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza's Swiss villa, *La Favorita,* forms the greatest private collection on earth. The 57 masterpieces in this exhibition constitute only about one-sixth of the Old Masters' paintings in the Thyssen-Bornemisza family gallery, which also includes superb medieval sculpture and European decorative arts, modern abstractions and Oriental carpets.

The foundations of the family fortune were laid by August Thyssen, grandfather of the present Baron. In 1871, the German industrialist began an iron and steel factory which became phenomenally successful. August Thyssen, however, was not a collector.

In 1906, Heinrich Thyssen, August's second son, married the daughter of an American woman and a Hungarian aristocrat. Shortly afterwards, Heinrich was adopted by his father-in-law, Baron Bornemisza, and was made the first Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza. His family moved to Switzerland in 1933 and bought *La Favorita* near the Swiss-Italian border. Soon, an art gallery was added to the villa; a garden terrace separates the new wing from the family quarters. The villa and its gallery look down a forested mountainside to Lake Lugano.

The first Baron acquired two-thirds of the paintings now in *La Favorita.* His natural love was the German school. The more than 70 German pictures outrank those in any other private collection and in most public museums. To the Baron, who was vehemently anti-Nazi, these paintings served as mementos of the homeland he refused to visit.

When the first Baron died in 1947, his estate was divided between his four children. The second and present Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza, the new head of the family, felt the collection should remain intact as a memorial to his father. He bought back as much as he could from his brother and sisters and then expanded into other schools and centuries.

Half the works in this exhibition were acquired by the second Baron. In adding to his father's few panels and canvases from Italy, he created a group of more than 80 Italian pictures, now the richest part of the collection. Nearly all the French and Spanish pictures, too, are recent additions.

This exhibition has been made possible by a grant from United Technologies Corporation, Hartford, Connecticut. United Technologies is the parent organization for companies whose products include Otis elevators, Carrier air conditioners, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft jet engines, Sikorsky helicopters, and other high-technology lines.

Cover:
Hans Memling *Flemish, c.1435–1494*
25 Portrait of a Young Man [Reverse: Still Life] *painted about 1490*

Jean-Honoré Fragonard
French, 1732–1806
47 The Seesaw *painted about 1750–52*

Antonello da Messina *Italian, c.1430–1479*
1 Portrait of a Man *signed and painted before 1475*

The anatomical realism of this portrait reveals the 15th century rebirth of interest in nature. Renaissance naturalism also accounts for the careful observation of the beard stubble. The lights playing in the eyes and the subtle shadows below the brows, nose, and chin result from the use of transparent glazes of thinned oil pigment. Both the detailing and the luminosity are characteristic of the oil technique developed by Flemish Renaissance masters such as Jan van Eyck [#20]. Antonello, trained in Naples, introduced the northern European painting medium to Italy.

Fra Bartolommeo *Italian, 1472 (?)–1517*
2 Holy Family with Infant Saint John in a Landscape *painted about 1505*

John the Baptist, being the patron saint of Florence, has often been depicted by artists of that cultural center. The Bible does not mention a meeting between the sacred half-cousins until the Baptism, when they were adults. Christian legends supplied the tender subject of the infants being introduced after the Holy Family returned from Egypt. Fra Bartolommeo, a Dominican brother who was a genius at conveying High Renaissance serenity, composed the scene symmetrically. The angle of Joseph's staff and the adoring gazes of Mary and John direct attention toward the centrally placed baby Jesus.

Giovanni Bellini(?) and Workshop *Italian, c.1430/31–1516*
3 Nunc Dimittis *painted about 1505*

The Gospel of Luke tells the rarely depicted episode of the old man who could not die until he had seen the Christ. The aged Simeon, after taking the infant Jesus into his arms, prayed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart". Although the meeting occurred in the Temple at Jerusalem, Giovanni Bellini, one of the great poets of landscape painting, places it in a pastoral valley before the Italian Alps. Bellini conceived the composition and painted key passages; however, experts sense the hands of studio apprentices in the execution.

Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canale)
Italian, 1697–1768
4 Piazza San Marco in Venice *painted about 1723*

The long arcades of government offices plummet attention toward the Basilica of San Marco, begun in Byzantine times but continually embellished. The pink marble palace of the doges, or dukes, of Venice appears in blazing sunlight behind the shadowed base of the Campanile. Canaletto was to become Europe's foremost topographical painter, famed for his exact perspectives.

Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canale) *Italian, 1697–1768*

5 View of the Canal Grande from San Vio *painted about 1719*

The impressive structure across the Grand Canal is the Palazzo Corner della Ca' Grande, home of one of Venice's most patrician families. Nearer at hand, beggars loaf in a tiny piazza, a maid leans over a balcony above them, and a chimney sweep works on the roof. This vivacious scene is the same size as three other Canalettos, including one in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection [#4]. The artist did not begin to create a whole suite; apparently, the set of four evolved gradually in his mind.

Vittore Carpaccio *Italian, 1465/67–1525/26*

6 Young Knight in a Landscape (Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino) *signed and dated 1510*

Carpaccio's penchant for crisp clarity of form overspread this canvas with insistent detailing. Even the reflections in the armor and on the lake create intricate patterns. The decorative flair of these objects conceals a wealth of hidden symbolism. The scrub oak on the shore, for instance, recalls that the subject's family name, Rovere, means "oak" in Italian. Carpaccio proudly signed and dated this portrait on the paper affixed to the stump at right. The Venetian artist's pride was justified: this work is the earliest surviving full-length, life-size portrait painted in Italy.

Giacomo Ceruti *Italian, active 1720–1757*

7 Group of Beggars *painted in the late 1740s or 1750s(?)*

Little is known of Ceruti's life except that he was active in virtually every city of northern Italy. Although he painted portraits and altarpieces, he was best known for depicting peasants and the downtrodden, earning the nickname in his own lifetime of *Il Pitocchetto*, "The Beggar." This work is among the largest and most monumental of Ceruti's scenes. The heroic scale lends the three aged, stooped figures a personal dignity which contrasts to their wretched circumstances.

Francesco del Cossa *Italian, 1435/36–1477*

8 Portrait of a Man Holding a Ring *painted about 1472*

The tight linearity of this portrait characterizes the ornamental taste of Ferrara, where Cossa was a court artist for the d'Este family. The whole seems more drawn than painted. The spiraling clouds, whorls of rock, and full curls set off a face which even has circular cheek bones. Cossa's tawny, pale tones are especially sympathetic to the sitter's coloring. The hand which projects beyond the marble ledge and into the viewer's space is a tour-de-force of illusionism. The gold ring must be a key to the sitter's identity.

Duccio di Boninsegna *Italian, active 1278–1318/19*

9 Christ and the Woman of Samaria *painted in 1308/11*

On June 9, 1311, after four years' work, a new high altar was carried in triumphant procession to the Cathedral of Siena. Created by the genius Duccio, it was the largest and most complex altar yet painted in Europe. The front depicted the Madonna and Child, life-size, surrounded by a heavenly court; hence, its name of *Maestà*, or "majesty." Small scenes of Christ's ministry and Passion covered the reverse; this panel has subsequently been removed from the *Maestà's* back.

Giovanni di Paolo *Italian, active 1420–1482*

10 Saint Catherine Before Pope Gregory XI at Avignon *painted in 1447/49*

During the "Babylonian Captivity" of 1305 to 1377, the papal court resided at Avignon in southern France. In 1376, Saint Catherine of Siena pleaded successfully with Pope Gregory XI to return the Holy See to Rome. The pope warms to Catherine's plea, as can be sensed in his delicate handling and pale hues which match the diminutive size and simple tones of the nun and her attendant. The cardinals and secretaries, however, scowl in disapproval; their sternness is accentuated by the heavy folds of their almost garishly colored robes.

Giovanni Antonio Guardi *Italian, 1699–1760*

11 Scene in a Garden of a Seraglio *painted in 1742/43*

Oriental fantasies enjoyed a great vogue during the eighteenth century. Themes "a la turc" were stimulated by embassies from the Middle East in 1714 and 1721 as well as by contemporary translations of the *Thousand and One Nights*. This "turquerie" formed part of a suite for forty-three decorations for a palace in Verona. Ironically, the patron was Field Marshall von der Schulenburg who, as general of the Venetian forces, fought the Turks. Giovanni Antonio Guardi embued the scene with his spritely style. In comparison with this animated courtyard scene, the companion piece of a quiet harem is more subdued [#12].

Giovanni Antonio Guardi *Italian, 1699–1760*

12 Scene in a Harem *painted in 1742/43*

The sultan's Favorite toys with her jeweled belt buckle, perhaps a recent gift, as harem attendants approach with a new package. Capriciously, the tiled floor is pitched forward to best display its sumptuous pattern. The painter, to ensure accuracy, adapted some motifs from a 1714 publication about Turkey and the Levant. But, the pastel colors are entirely his own. The tints of rose and blue are perfectly attuned to the fragile spell cast by this enchanting tableau. There is a slight difference in style between this calm scene and its frothier companion piece [#11].

Pietro Longhi *Italian, 1702–1785*
13 Il Solletico *painted about 1755*

"The Tickle" is presented like a comedy on stage; the soubrette, finger to lips, silences the viewer just as an actress might teasingly address an audience. The painting of classical nudes hanging on the wall sets the scene for a mild titillation. Enter the giggling girls who proceed to arouse the provocatively sprawled youth. A theatrical spotlight accents the two principals, costumed in pale yellows and greens, against the dark, damask-covered walls of a Venetian palace.

Palma Vecchio (Jacopo Negretti) *Italian, c.1480–1528*
14 Portrait of a Woman, "La Bella" *painted about 1520*

"The Beauty" is the most splendid of the half-length females for which Palma gained special fame. The decollete of her gown and her forthright gaze suggest she might be one of Venice's fabled courtesans. Certainly, her slashed sleeves and billowing taffetas are the masterpiece of a very expensive Venetian dressmaker. The rough wall and hard parapet accentuate the soft glow of her milk-white skin and golden tresses. Palma was a pupil of Giovanni Bellini [#3]. But, the simulation of textures also shows Palma's debt to the technique of layered oil paints developed by his contemporary Titian [#17].

Giovanni Battista Piazzetta *Italian, 1683–1754*
15 Portrait of Giulia Lama *painted about 1720*

Giulia Lama, an altarpiece painter, was one of the many successful women artists in the eighteenth century. Piazzetta does not show her at work; her hand is poised as though pausing for inspiration. In this portrayal, she becomes a sibyl or muse of poetic reverie and artistic creation. Piazzetta always favored such warm brown tones and dense contrasts of light and shade. The serious gravity of his paintings makes him an anomaly in eighteenth-century Venice.

Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto *Italian, 1518–1594*
16 Portrait of a Venetian Senator *painted about 1570–75*

Only with his unbelievable quickness could Tintoretto have ever executed his innumerable canvases. With a few deft strokes, for instance, Tintoretto created the highlights which skate in a fitful path over the sleeves. The ermine lining, too, is simply slurred in a marvelous shorthand. The brilliant, slapdash manner of the figure evidences the hand of the master, but the more detailed treatment of the background drapery might be the work of Tintoretto's daughter Marietta or some other studio assistant.

Vittore Carpaccio *Italian, 1465/67–1525/26*
6 Young Knight in a Landscape (Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino) *signed and dated 1510*

Tiziano Vecellio Titian *Italian, c.1488/90–1576*

17 Portrait of Doge Francesco Venier *painted in 1554/55*

One of the most influential artists of all time, Titian developed the method of painting in heavily saturated oils over a dark priming coat, so that forms emerge dramatically from shade into the light. This work, which lacks the lustrous glazes of a finished oil, seems to be Titian's life sketch of the Doge, or duke of Venice, Francesco Venier. In 1555, Titian supplied a completed portrait of Venier to hang in the Grand Council Chamber of the Ducal Palace; unfortunately, the final work was destroyed two years later in a fire.

Anonymous Burgundian Artist *Flemish-French, early 15th century*

18 Posthumous Portrait of Wenceslas of Luxembourg, Duke of Brabant (1337–1383) *painted about 1405–15*

A romantic by nature, Wenceslas identified himself with the title hero in *Méliador*, an epic of chivalry composed by his court poet Froissant. Since Méliador wore blue, so did Wenceslas, earning him the nickname "Blue Duke." The reverse of this panel once bore an inscription giving the duke's age as thirty-four and, thus, implying a date of 1371. If painted then, the work should betray the heraldic, stylized manner of the Middle Ages. However, its vigorous realism places it in the Renaissance of the early 1400s.

Petrus Christus *Flemish, c.1410–1472/73*

19 Our Lady of the Barren Tree *painted after 1463(?)*

This private devotional image was surely painted for a member of the Confraternity of the Dry Tree, which the artist and his wife themselves joined in 1463. The image of the Virgin standing in a barren tree is drawn from Ezekiel: "I the Lord . . . have made the dry tree to flourish." It is not coincidental that the spikey branches resemble Christ's crown of thorns. The gold initial "A" abbreviates the first letter of the *Ave Maria*, while the fifteen "A"s combine to symbolize the one hundred and fifty Hail Marys of the Rosary.

Jan van Eyck *Flemish, c.1390–1441*

20a Angel of the Annunciation *(left side of diptych)*

20b The Annunciate *(right side of diptych)*
painted about 1436

Jan van Eyck, the foremost artist in Renaissance Bruges, experimented with transparent layers of tinted oils until he could duplicate effects of light in nature. Northern European artists were quick to adopt his realist innovation, and it was introduced to Italian painters by Antonello [#1]. This grisaille, or "gray painting," meant to imitate expensive stone sculpture, demonstrates the revolution of van Eyck's approach. The black marble niches illusionistically reflect the simulated statues, aglow with amber veining.

Jan Gossaert, called Mabuse *Flemish, 1470/80–1532*

21 Adam and Eve *painted after 1508(?)*

The bodies of Adam and Eve are taken almost exactly from an engraving printed in 1504 by the German Renaissance master Albrecht Dürer. Mabuse did alter the figures by portraying a greater tension in their muscles. The initiator of Original Sin, Eve, stands before an orange tree, its many-seeded fruit suggesting lust. Mabuse was the first artist to introduce classical themes with modest nude figures into Netherlandish painting.

Maerten van Heemskerck *Flemish, 1498–1574*

22 Portrait of a Lady with Spindle and Distaff *painted about 1529/32*

Both classical and biblical sources refer to spinning wool or flax as the mark of an industrious woman and chaste wife. The direct confrontation of this burgher woman with the viewer must surely indicate such an allegorical meaning in her portrait. The strange perspective makes her loom larger than life, dwarfing the yarn winder and basket with shears which hang nearby on the wall. Decorated with a carved and gilt dophin, the elaborate spinning wheel enhances her sense of presence by forming a barrier between the painted space and the outside world.

Juán de Flandes *Flemish-Spanish, active 1496–1519*

23 Pietà with John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene *painted about 1500*

The small scale of this wooden panel is not its only indication that the painter was trained as a miniaturist for manuscripts. The figures are distributed randomly in space to generate a flattened, decorative quality somewhat reminiscent of book illustrations. As a lovely vignette, the low sun strikes the side of the thief on the cross. This pietà, or "pity," could have been an independent painting or part of an altarpiece.

Lucas van Leyden *Flemish, 149(4?)–1533*

24 Cardplayers *painted about 1518/21*

Genre subjects or the portrayal of daily activities were almost exclusively a northern European innovation, and Lucas van Leyden was among the earliest genre practitioners. Since games of chance are the product of idleness, a moralizing content is probable. The woman, for instance, plays a knave of spades, symbol of rascality. The youth, with many gold coins, wins the lady's love away from the old fool, who has gone bankrupt. In short, all the players are sinful.

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes *Spanish, 1746–1828*
53 Asensio Julia in His Studio *signed and painted about 1798*

Hans Memling *Flemish, c.1435–1494*
25 Portrait of a Young Man [Reverse: Still Life] *painted about 1490*

This portrait formed part of a small family altar showing the donor in adoration of the Madonna and Child in another panel, now lost. The outside, or back, of this wing has a floral arrangement that refers to the Virgin Mary through its symbolic lilies and irises. And, the still life establishes the young Fleming's social status with its imported Italian majolica pot and Turko-Caucasian carpet. The diffused luminosity typifies Memling's wistful nature, as do the trees, which are as carefully groomed as the youth's hair.

Petrus Paulus Rubens *Flemish, 1577–1640*
26 The Toilette of Venus [After Titian] *painted in 1628/29(?)*

The classical theme of the toilette of Venus was revived during the Italian Renaissance by Titian [#17]. A century later, Rubens copied one of Titian's goddesses of love, possibly while on a diplomatic mission in 1628–29. Instead of the idealized beauty in Titian's Venetian paintings, however, the northern master has converted the model into a robust Flemish woman of Antwerp. Scholar, linguist, and diplomat, Rubens was also the highest paid artist in seventeenth-century Europe. The vigor of his grand manner style is evident throughout this composition.

Albrecht Altdorfer *German, c.1480–1538*
27 Portrait of a Woman *painted in the late 1510s or 1520s*

The Germanic taste for strong patterning sets these bold tones against each other without any mollifying transitions. The beige wimple headdress, white blouse, and black bodice and cuffs virtually collide with the scarlet skirt. The pinkish-orange and green chageaent taffeta sleeves are the most compelling portion of this electric color scheme. The peculiar background must be an olive curtain or drapery. Yet, it writhes like storm clouds or crashing waves, generating a phosphorescent field which is totally at odds with the woman's docile eyes and smiling lips.

Christoph Amberger *German, c.1500–1561/62*
28 Portrait of Mattheus Schwarz *dated 1542*

Mattheus Schwarz was eccentric and apparently spent all his money on clothes. He even commissioned a costume autobiography, ranging from his swaddling clothes to a mourning outfit, which Amberger helped illustrate. This complex assembly of motifs owes as much to the sitter as to the painter. Schwarz cast his own horoscope; lying on the window sill, it gives the precise quarter-hour of his birth and of his forty-five years at the time of the portrait sittings. His sign is Pisces, and the deluge outside might refer to this watery sector of the zodiac.

Hans Baldung, called Grien *German, 1484/85–1545*

29 Portrait of a Lady *signed and dated 1530*

Baldung's mannered, pictorial willfulness must have been deliberately self-conscious. Most astonishing here is the cold, grayed white used for the flesh. Compared to the green velvet and orange brocade gown, the face seems a death mask. The undulating black cords float, weightless over her bosom, as though there were no gravity. And, the throat pendant and gold chain hover in air, casting shadows down onto her skin.

Lucas Cranach the Elder *German, 1472–1553*

30 The Madonna with the Bunch of Grapes *signed and painted about 1509–14*

Cranach's females enjoy a pensive beauty of oval faces, high foreheads, and downcast eyes. In this panel Cranach used the simple format of a half-length Madonna holding the infant Christ in her lap. Mary's face is softly blended, especially viewed through her filmy veil, and her robes are smoothly modeled in full folds. The horizon is rendered in the same manner. In contrast, the fir tree and the castle are sharply detailed, reflecting Cranach's training in the Danube School of landscapists.

Johann Koerbecke *German, 1400/10–1491*

31 The Assumption of the Virgin *painted in 1456/57*

The Assumption is the principal feast of the Virgin; the concept of her bodily ascent into heaven dates from an apocryphal treatise of the fourth or fifth century. Later embellishments told of Saint Thomas peering skeptically into her coffin. The mundane world of the apostles is depicted with aggressive realism, as in the abrupt, geometric angle of the tomb's lid. The celestial court occupies a lyric realm of diminutive figures interlaced over a tooled gold aura. While Christ emerges to greet his mother, angelic orchestras float on ribbon-like clouds to celebrate her. This scene is one of sixteen side panels finished in 1457 to flank the central, sculptural group on the high altar of a Cistercian abbey near Münster.

Anonymous Nürnberg Master *German, 16th century*

32 Portrait of a Young Woman *painted about 1525*

The strength of this portrait is the draftsmanship, especially the limpid, fluid lines that describe the deep-set eyes and full lips. The thoughtful, dreamy expression seems a very natural extension of the woman's settled, easy bearing. The inscription gives her name of Anna, her wifely status, and her age of twenty-two or twenty-three. Her costume places her in Nürnberg, a south German city which was a major commercial center during the Renaissance. Similar outfits occur in drawings by Albrecht Dürer, the principal genius of the German Renaissance.

Anonymous South German Artist *3rd quarter of the 1400s*

33 Wedding Portrait of a Woman Wearing the Order of the Swan

Since she holds a carnation as an emblem of fidelity, the woman is a new bride. She wears the Order of Our Lady of the Swan; the Virgin and Child form the upper gilt medallion. The height of fashion, a single sleeve is embroided in gold and encrusted with pearls. The stark, linear silhouettes accentuate the contours at the expense of any three-dimensional modeling. The pleated or shirred headdress, for example, becomes a fabulous decorative shape without any solidity.

Bernhard Strigel *German, c.1460–1528*

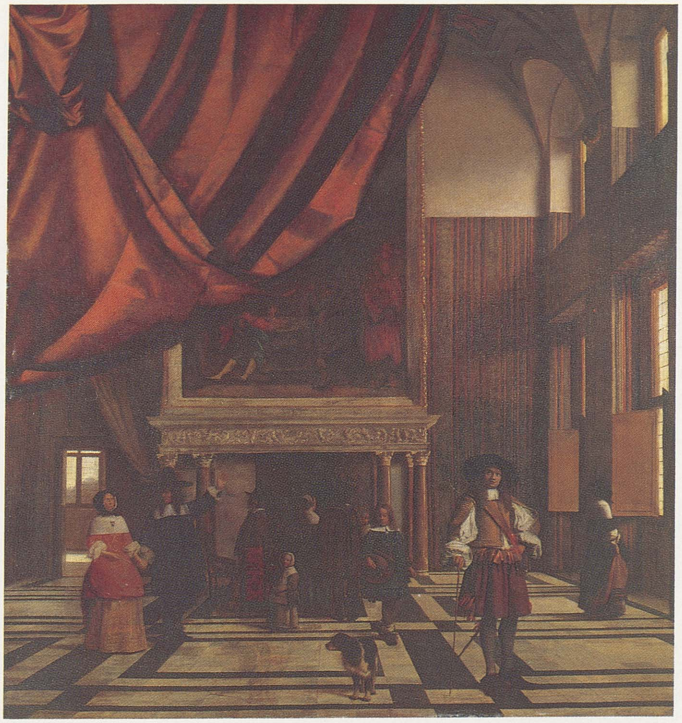
34 The Annunciation to Saint Anne and Saint Joachim *painted about 1506/07*

By tradition, the aged Joachim fasted in the wilderness while praying for a child. Seen through the window, accompanied by his flocks and shepherds on the mountain, Joachim receives the annunciation that the child of his old age would be blessed throughout the world as the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. Another angel appears to Joachim's wife, Anne, at home. With the Germanic trait of expressive storytelling, the artist depicts the angel tugging at Anne's wimple headdress in his eagerness to convey the news.

Jan van de Cappelle *Dutch, c.1623/25–1679*

35 Calm Sea with Many Ships *signed and painted about 1660*

Rather than apprenticing under a particular master van de Cappelle learned art by studying his own gallery of old master and contemporary works. Among the greatest of all marine painters, van de Cappelle preferred ships at rest, bathed in the delicate aura of twilight. The sky is punctuated with sails; some saturated in light, others gently shaded. The red, white, and blue of Dutch flags enrich these muted tones. The stable composition of vertical masts balancing a low horizon line adds to the palpable stillness.



Pieter de Hooch *Dutch, 1629–after 1684*
38 Interior of the Council Chamber of Burgomasters in the Town Hall in Amsterdam, with Visitors *signed and painted about 1666/68*

Willem Claesz Heda *Dutch, 1599–1680/82*
36 Still Life *signed and dated 1634*

Holland, with the best ports in seventeenth-century Europe, grew wealthy almost overnight. The prosperous Dutch merchants desired paintings to embellish their newly acquired social status. Artists, forced to compete in a buyers' market, had to specialize in subject matter. The Haarlem painter Heda carried this concentration to an extreme, creating only "breakfast pieces" of interrupted meals. The satin tablecloth, broken goblet, juicy lemon, and crusty pastry are evidence of Heda's miraculous talent for imitating textures.

Jan Davidsz de Heem *Dutch, 1606–1683/84*
37 Still Life with Flowers *signed and painted after 1636*

De Heem, trained in Utrecht, painted meticulously detailed floral bouquets as well as breakfast pieces in the manner of Heda [#36]. The primly centered glass carafe here recalls his strict Dutch schooling, but the flowers and fruit are extravagantly arranged. The short-lived blooms are reminders of mortal brevity. Furthermore, most of these plants have specific religious connotations. The grain, for instance, symbolizes Resurrection since wheat is the source for Eucharist bread.

Pieter de Hooch *Dutch, 1629–after 1684*
38 Interior of the Council Chamber of Burgomasters in the Town Hall in Amsterdam, with Visitors *signed and painted about 1666/68*

From its black-and-white marble flooring to its gilded ceiling coffers, the council chamber is calculated for effect. The whole conception of the painting is as theatrical as the town hall itself. De Hooch, for example, drew back a curtain so that the viewer, peering into the room, becomes an elegant tourist along with the beribboned dandy. The original position of the spaniel can be seen as a pentimento, or "repentance," just to the left of its final placement in the design.

Willem Kalf *Dutch, 1619–1693*
39 Still Life with Nautilus Cup *signed and dated 1662*

This masterpiece is perhaps the finest of Willem Kalf's ostentatious still lifes. A Persian carpet supports an enviable display of goods that fades sensually back into darkness. Light strikes a lemon, an expensive food for Holland, and flashes from the blue-and-white procelain of a Ming Chinese bowl. The illumination then accents a Nautilus shell mounted as a sea serpent; the gold sparkles, while the mother-of-pearl glows translucently. Finally, before the dim interior engulfs all, a Venetian covered goblet appears as a phantom of ruddy wine and nearly invisible glass.

Joos de Momper *Dutch, 1564–1634*
40 View of a Port, with Motifs from Rome *signed and painted in the 1620s(?)*

De Momper oddly combined stylized renderings of depth with realistic illusions of atmosphere. The right side of this panel, for example, looks like stage scenery; the landscape recedes in layers of a brown foreground, green middle distance, and blue horizon. In contrast, the left half accurately captures sunlight playing over the rickety stairs and balconies of stuccoed buildings.

Frans Jansz Post *Dutch, 1612–1680*

41 Village with "Casa-Grande" in Brazil *signed and dated 1656*

From 1637 to 1644, Frans Post was official artist in Brazil for a Dutch West India Company expedition. The landscapes he painted and drew there were the first views of the New World created by a professional European painter. Following Post's return to Haarlem, he continued to depict exotic motifs for the rest of his life. In this humble plantation compound, the so-called "Casa-Grande" is barely more than a two-story thatched hut. A priest stands before a chapel, while the workers indulge in a bit of impromptu merrymaking.

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn *Dutch, 1606–1669*

42 Portrait of a Man before an Archway *signed and dated 164(3?)*

Among seventeenth-century Holland's specialists in portraiture, still life, genre, landscape, or historical and religious narrative, Rembrandt stands alone as a genius who commanded every subject matter. His technical facility at revealing forms and textures through controlled lighting was also unexcelled. The face, modeled in thickly impastoed oil paint, differs startlingly from the tightly rendered ruff. The precise detail of the costume, such as the light just catching a curl in the cuff, recalls the painter's earlier work. The broad handling of oils and the unguarded intimacy in the expression, however, look forward to Rembrandt's mature style.

Jacob Isaacksz van Ruisdael *Dutch, 1628/29–1682*

43 Winter Landscape *signed and painted about 1670*

Ominous clouds roll up and out of the left horizon, countering the movement of a canal leading back from the right foreground. The skating figures throw snowballs and flop on the ice in this somber, blue-gray environment; yet, their actions imply a last scurrying before the oncoming storm. Jacob van Ruisdael, the supreme poet of Dutch landscapists, found heroic drama in his flat, native countryside. Since Holland's low horizon always lies beneath an active sky, Ruisdael devoted his efforts to animating his pictures with spacious atmospheres.

Salomon van Ruysdael *Dutch, 1600/03 (?)–1670*

44 Return of the Fishermen *signed and dated 1660 or 1666*

Salomon van Ruysdael remained a realist, never exaggerating the calm beauty of Haarlem's countryside and seashore. In contrast, his nephew Jacob van Ruisdael [#43]—who spelled the family name differently—transformed nature into romantic moods. After Salomon taught Jacob, the nephew, in turn, influenced the uncle's style. This late work by Salomon betrays the impact of the more emphatic scenes developed by Jacob and other young landscapists. The vivid blue sky, for example, is shot with the heat of sunset. But this picture retains Salomon's touch of homey naturalism in the fisherman and his wife returning home in a rowboat.

Jan Steen *Dutch, 1625/26–1679*

45 Self Portrait *signed and painted in the 1660s*

Jan Steen often employed himself and his family as models for his low-life genre scenes of drinking bouts and country dances. Only when it was necessary to pay the bills would he accept commissions for formal portraits or depict upper-class activities. Steen's self portrait is wonderfully honest, conveying both his wit and his warmth. Steen, who loved the theater, depicts himself dressed in the romantic-gallant costume worn by young lovers on the stage. The hands, poised on the lute, are drawn with special sensitivity.

François Boucher *French, 1703–1770*

46 La Toilette *signed and dated 1742*

Favorite artist of Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour, François Boucher concocted a world of frivolity perfectly attuned to his patrons' desires. In this charmingly cluttered boudoir, a maid offers a bonnet for her mistress' approval. The fashionable lady, still wearing the smock which kept hair powder off her clothes, ties her stocking garter. Lest the viewer miss the point of this beguiling coquetry, a mischievous kitten toys within the petticoats.

Jean-Honoré Fragonard *French, 1732–1806*

47 The Seesaw *painted about 1750–52*

The naïve ardor of adolescent games was understood, in eighteenth-century society, to lead to the first discoveries of adult love. The heady vertigo induced by seesawing is, therefore, a prelude to dizzying passion. Amidst peals of laughter, the girl will soon tumble into the youth's arms. The two babies are but thinly disguised cupids. The flush in their cheeks, the succulent picnic of fruit and wine; the coy abandon of the upswept skirt all add hot, rosy accents to the cool woodland glade.

Nicolas Lancret *French, 1690–1743*
48 La Terre *painted about 1732*

"The Earth" formed part of a suite on the Four Elements, including Fire, Air, and Water, commissioned by Louis XV's officer of the royal stables. An ornamental fountain and the soft silhouette of a large tree dominate this park, wherein young men work the flower bed while young women fuss over a still life of fruits and vegetables. The subject of a genteel, courtly gathering owes much to the example of Antoine Watteau [#50 & #51]. Lancret's interpretation, though, seems absolutely robust compared to Watteau's ethereal pensiveness.

Jacques Linard *French, c.1600–1645*
49 Chinese Bowl with Flowers *signed and dated 1640*

Linard earned the distinction of being a founder of French still-life painting. Aware of the ornate complexity of Flemish and Dutch still lifes [#36, #37, & #39], Linard favored the severe, rational arrangements seen here. A single bowl is centered on a bare stone ledge and silhouetted against a black vacuum. Symmetry prevails; a vertical axis locks the ball of sweet william, sprig of orange blossoms, and the Chinese bowl together.

Bernhard Strigel
German, c.1460–1528
34 The Annunciation to Saint Anne and Saint Joachim *painted about 1506/07*

Antoine Watteau *French, 1684–1721*
50 La Halte *painted about 1709/10*

Avoiding the harsh realities of war, the young Watteau depicted spirited marches and anecdotal scenes of camp life. "The Halt" is among the most engaging of these bivouacs. Smoke rises from cooking pots, not from cannon fire. The woman in yellow must be the companion of the officer who directs the unloading of her baggage. Behind her, a couple heads toward a makeshift shelter, adorned with a wreath, for their rendezvous. Since the composition does not reach to the edges of the canvas, it possibly was meant to be mounted into carved wooden paneling as a wall decoration.

Antoine Watteau *French, 1684–1721*
51 Pierrot Content *painted about 1712*

Pierrot, always misunderstood and never loved, sits mutely among members of the traditional comedy. The archetypal odd man out, he here enjoys the attentions of the others, who normally mock or ignore him. The shy, consumptive Watteau probably identified himself with Pierrot. Watteau invented the subject matter of the *fêtes galantes*, or dalliances of exquisite lovers in enchanted woodlands. The graceful poses and pastel tones convey the bittersweet nature of love.

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes
Spanish, 1746–1828
52 El Tío Paquete *painted about 1819/20*

In 1792, Goya suffered a severe illness which left him totally deaf. Cut off from the convivial society he so loved, the Spanish court artist grew increasingly introspective. He decorated the walls of his home near Madrid with nightmarish visions so moody in tone they came to be called the Black Paintings. Not as somber as the Black Paintings, this portrayal of a sightless beggar is nevertheless arresting. Goya, handicapped himself, no doubt sympathized with "Uncle Paquete," a blind singer and guitarist who, when not begging on church steps, entertained at aristocratic parties.

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes
Spanish, 1746–1828
53 Asensio Julia in His Studio *signed and painted about 1798*

Goya's follower Asensio Julia never developed into an artist of consequence himself. Goya, who inscribed the portrait as a token of friendship, may here be depicting his assistant pausing from work, high in the scaffolding of the cupola. The thick strokes of paint in the setting focus attention on the finer, more delicate finish of the hair and face. The eccentric grid of loose boards creates deep, velvety shadows and pockets of warm light. Against this looming, geometric environment, Julia appears isolated and vulnerable.

El Greco (Domenico Theotocopuli)
Spanish, 1541–1614
54 The Annunciation *painted about 1572–76*

Born in Greece, Domenico Theotocopuli was trained to paint icons, or holy images, in the hieratic Byzantine style. In Italy and in Spain, where he spent his adult career, his name was virtually unpronounceable. Thus, during his lifetime, he became known as, simply, "The Greek." Painted during his sojourn in Italy, this scene betrays his debt to the Venetian artists who most influenced him. The rich color is due to his knowledge of Titian [#17]; the bold highlights derive from Tintoretto [#16]. The composition, however, is El Greco's own.

El Greco (Domenico Theotocopuli)
Spanish, 1541–1614
55 The Annunciation *painted about 1600*

El Greco's mature style reflects a resurgence of his mystic, Byzantine origins, coupled with the intensity of Spanish faith during the Counter-Reformation. There could be no more dramatic contrast than this late work's emotionalism compared to the rational approach evident in the same subject treated by the same master three decades earlier [#54]. The extravagantly elongated figures are drawn out of all natural or consistent proportion. Space, as understood by mere mortals, does not exist; there is neither foreground nor background within the erratic clouds which eddy across the composition. Reason has been discarded in favor of ecstasy.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo *Spanish, 1618–1682*
56 The Madonna and Saints Appearing to Saint Rose *painted about 1666–68*

The thirteenth-century Saint Rose was restored from a grave illness by a vision of the Virgin, who instructed her to join the Third Order of Saint Francis. Murillo does not depict a specific moment in the saint's life but a summation of her devotion to the Madonna. In the distance, Saint Rose appears again. Murillo, who began his career painting at street markets and fairs while his patrons waited, never lost his popular, sentimental touch. The four Virgin Martyrs are prettily idealized. In comparison, the humble Saint Rose is somewhat homelier and sallow in complexion.

Francisco de Zurbarán *Spanish, 1598–1664*
57 Saint Agnes *painted in the 1640s(?)*

Saint Agnes holds the palm frond of martyrdom and an innocent lamb, suggesting her love of Christ. Also, the Latin word for lamb, *agnus*, is a play on her name. Her elaborate costume, befitting a heavenly courtier, is a metaphor for the splendor of her faith. Zurbarán achieved brilliant, almost acid, clarity in his renderings. His ascetic style spotlights the saint against a neutral background and reveals every crinkled fold of her satins. The taut edges and crisp highlights generate a crystalline monumentality.

Exhibition Schedule:

National Gallery of Art, Washington, November 17, 1979–February 17, 1980
The Detroit Institute of Arts, March 12–May 11, 1980
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, May 29–August 3, 1980
The Cleveland Museum of Art, September 3–October 26, 1980
Los Angles County Museum of Art, November 25, 1980–January 18, 1981
The Denver Art Museum, February 11–April 5, 1981
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, April 25–June 28, 1981
William Rockhill Nelson Gallery/Atkins Museum, Kansas City, July 18–September 20, 1981
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, October 9–December 6, 1981